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THE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE: ITS INFLUENCE UPON GOVERNMENT.

A

LECTURE

BEFORE THE

Young Men's Christian Association

OF

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LECTURE.

A NATION'S Government is itself incarnate ; and its institutional history furnishes a fair, if not infallible, test of its distinguishing traits. Thus, who can fail to perceive, in the numerous, varying and contradictory phases of the governmental history of France the characteristic features of the French people, happily described by a great Frenchman as a people fertile in contrasts and extreme in act ; now below the level of humanity, now far above ; unchangeable in leading features, yet fickle in its daily opinions and tastes ; now hostile to subjection, now wedded to servitude ; more prone to worship chance, force, success, eclat, noise than real glory ; endowed with more heroism than virtue, more genius than common sense ; the most brilliant and the most dangerous nation of Europe ? Who, on the other hand, will not recognize in the uniform, and rarely-revolutionary development of English Institutions, the steady, careful, measured march of the methodical English ?—a people singularly unimpulsive in character, and hence barren of contrasts, moderate in action, and regular in movement ; attached to old habits, both of thought and deed, and indisposed to change them, and hence, while strongly marked by distinct characteristics, preserving a wonderful unity ; more virtuous than heroic, and more sensible than brilliant ; too wise to mistake the shadow for the substance, too sagacious to be diverted from, and too persevering to be foiled in their purposes, they have been, for ages, the freest, most substantial, most reliable and most prosperous nation of Europe. Who, likewise, will not recognize in

the marvellous and unparalleled activity exhibited upon this Continent, the restless, progressive, all-daring, irreverential spirit of our people?—a people not so mercurial as the French, nor yet as unimpressionable as the English; with little reverence for forms, little respect for routine, and even little veneration for age, apart from its actual merits; a composite of all nations, with marked features of each; self-reliant, impetuous and energetic, yet generally prudent, persevering and successful—a people whose growth has amazed, whose prosperity has confounded, and whose alleged audacity has startled the world. But let not the position of government be mistaken. It cannot confer happiness, cannot create fireside contentment, cannot produce or increase personal excellence; for the causes of these are in the Individual. But that vast machine, of necessity, intertwines itself with the very fibres of the citizen, becomes enwrapped with his individual interests, penetrates the intricacies of social life, moulds the people and is moulded by them, and, with marked fidelity, mirrors forth their tastes, opinions and principles. Thus, where an Autocrat holds the life, liberty and property of his subjects at his will, where no legislative authority intervenes between the power-holder and people, where Courts are unknown or are the supple servants of authority, where the Church even is an adjunct of Government, and where no powerful, deep-rooted, time-honored, equalizing Institutions break the force of arbitrary power, we cannot, and do not, find in the people advanced intelligence, active intellect, elevated sentiment or a heroic nature. For neither the cultivated, the daringly intellectual, the truly home-loving, nor the naturally heroic are fit, because not passive, subjects of unlimited authority. In the opposite case, where there is no concentrated power, where there are clearly defined limits to every department, where the people have control of their laws and customs, where impregnable Institutions break up the characteristic level-plain of Despotism, we expect to find, and do find, a people advanced beyond rudimental knowledge, having tested all the dogmas of the Schools, repudiated the

maxims by which cunning men have bound whole Continents, distinguished between the true and the false in morals, and fathomed their souls and sought daily to develop their hidden excellencies—a people who need liberty as they need vital air. Thus, there are Schools of Government as of Art; and while men speak of the contrasts between Ancient, Mediæval and Modern Art, they may as truly point out the contrasts between the various Schools of Government, which have severally commanded the obedience of portions of mankind. The explanation of this is simple. Man is as an organ, many-toned and deep, whose responsive chords are ever thrilling through the great Temple of the Universe—in the gentleness of the quiet peal, the plaintiveness of the melting wail, or the joyousness of the full, grand, over-swelling chorus. The causes of this diversity are numerous. By none are they thoroughly understood. Concerning them, there are conflicting theories. But their study can never be without interest; for who can be indifferent to those great problems, whose solution will make clear the path of human life, as it reaches back into the untraceable past, or stretches forth to the illimitable future?

I have said, there are conflicting theories touching the relative power of the forces which produce Human Progress.—One denies that the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE can be computed among the influences which control the movements of society. It is not denied that the influence exists and is active. But it is alleged that Religion is not a prime cause of social improvement, and has not been, as claimed, the great civilizer of the modern world; that changes of religion are in consequence of some previous advance in intelligence, and are hence dependent upon the latter; and that, in analyzing the causes which may justly be considered the motive-power of Humanity, History does not furnish the Religious Principle as one. The theory also excludes all moral influences, and claims intellectual acquisitions as the irresistible force impelling Man onward and upward. It is urged that “good feelings and good deeds die with the individual,” and that the degree of

civilization attained by any country, depends on the amount, the direction, and the diffusion of human knowledge. The theory also excludes feeling and passion from the list of governing influences—upon the ground that the feelings and passions of one class being antagonistic to those of another, are balanced thereby. Whence the two axiomatic conclusions—

First, That the effect of passion, good and bad, of vice as well as virtue, is in the great average of human affairs, nowhere to be seen.

Second, That the totality of human affairs is ultimately governed by the totality of human knowledge.

A commentator on this doctrine accepts most of it, but considers the passions of men as playing the largest part in the history of nations as of individuals; and that passion, allied with power, is the most formidable, and not the least permanent of the agencies which disturb or control Society. Other theories exist upon the general subject, but none of them fairly come before us in this discussion.

Knowledge is said to be the irresistible power—by which is meant intellectual acquisition, as antagonistic to moral or religious. But is it possible to dissociate entirely intellectual and moral truth? Is it possible to give our intellectual powers free range over the wide expanse of The Knowable, without thereby affording scope for the exercise of the moral sentiments? Can one side of a man move without the other? Can one-half of a man grow, and the other remain dwarfed? Can food be made to nourish one organ, and weaken another? Man's moral and intellectual natures are as intertwined as his nervous and arterial systems. One is more or less dependent upon the other. And both are regulated by the same conditions of health. Hence it may safely be asserted that a *purely* intellectual growth in a nation is a dreamer's myth. In spite of all effort, the moral nature will be invigorated or impaired by the causes which stimulate to intellectual activity. So that we might, admitting the dictum that the totality of human affairs is ultimately governed by the totality of human

knowledge, still claim that the moral and religious sentiments are not thereby dethroned, because they are, of necessity, a larger or smaller part of the propelling power. But we go further. While admitting the high position of intellectual knowledge, and conceding it to be an essential power, without which little substantial progress can be expected, we deny its exclusive claim, upon the ground of its inadequacy. Man is not all intellect, nor does he, even generally, act upon the conclusions of pure reason, unmodified by his sympathies, his sense of right, of prudence and other causes. But an explanation of human conduct which fails to embrace man's whole nature must be false. The great irresistible powers controlling Man must penetrate every part of man—must reach all his powers—must be co-extensive with his nature. This, intellectual acquisition is not. It is a most valuable agent. It is indispensable to all progress. It is elevating and alleviating in its tendencies. It enlarges the circle of human enjoyments. It is the “godlike principle which distinguishes man from the brute.” It gives man power over the universe. It reveals hidden things, and makes dark things plain. It solves the mysteries of the physical world, and the still greater mysteries which abound within one's self, whilst it expands Man's faculties, gives him new thoughts, and lifts him above degrading and brutalizing influences. But it is not the only power by which man is to rise. There is another, wider, deeper, broader, stronger. It is the power which the Almighty offers for man's salvation. Upon this alone, can mankind surely rest, for the true enjoyment of the present, and that bursting of agonizing bonds which we hopefully expect in the future.

It is further claimed, in support of this theory, that the passions and feelings of one part of society are balanced by those of the other part, and are hence unworthy of computation as promoting or retarding progress. Now, intelligence and ignorance are not more evenly distributed in society than good feelings and evil ones. If the latter two are considered destructive of each other's influence, why may not the ignorance of one part of society be likewise deemed to destroy

the influence of the intelligence of the other part? Why is it, that vice is presumed to destroy the power of virtue, in the great average of human life, and ignorance is not presumed to destroy the power of intelligence? Is there greater vitality in intelligence than in virtue, or is there less in ignorance than vice? On the contrary, real intelligence is always the companion of virtue, and ignorance is the handmaid of vice. And the theory which annihilates the influence of the one while permitting the influence of the other, must necessarily be false. For it were as sound to consider the sun and light, the night and darkness, or the tree and its fruit, mutually destructive.

It is further alleged that Religion has always varied with the amount of enlightenment in the age, that its truths were early acquired and have had little comparative influence, and that their operation was more direct and universal in the simpler than it can be in the present more complex stages of society. Religion cannot thus be reasoned out of existence. It has found many enemies, by whom its progress has been retarded. It has struggled long and painfully, and yet struggles with the master-passions of men. It has had its fields of triumph. It has also had its temporary reverses. But it comes from God, is supported by His hand, is sustained by His power, and will be finally triumphant. It is common for men to reason from themselves to Him, yet how unwisely! Such objections to the vitality of the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE are well answered in these eloquent words of Guizot, applied to another subject:

“The movements of Providence are not restricted to narrow bounds; it is not anxious to deduce to-day the consequence of the premises it laid down yesterday. It may defer this for ages, till the fulness of time shall come. Its logic will not be less conclusive for reasoning slowly. Providence moves through time, as the gods of Homer through space—it makes a step, and ages have rolled away.”

This theory not only implies, but openly asserts that “good feelings and good deeds die with the individual,” and hence

are powerless upon National character. Is this true? Individual character makes National character. We are all impressible by each other. No one is independent. No one's character is self-evolved; for all are modified by the associations of their daily life. We are surrounded with effective causes, which impress deeply all they reach, and they reach all. The physical world is ablaze with activities. Our homes, our walks, our resting-places, these streets, this spot, this town, yea the whole earth and the very firmament overflow with influences begun, many of them before we breathed, and daily grown more numerous and extensive, and comprehending in their reach all nature. No man can ascend above them. No man can descend below them. No man can escape them. If he flee to the desert, they are in the arid sand, the parched earth, the burning atmosphere. If to the mountains, they are in the trickling stream, the deep glen, the opening gorge. If to the uttermost parts of the earth, they are in the frigid sky, the crisp air, the very barrenness of bleakness. It is likewise in the mental and moral world. Thought does not die. Deeds, the product of thought, are made immortal by perpetual transmission. We receive thoughts into our minds, dwell upon them, and incorporate them with ourselves. They become part of us, having gone into our growth. They then live in us, and through us, in all we influence, directly or indirectly, well or ill—in our children, our friends, our acquaintances, our very enemies, and even those we know not, have never seen, and will never see, whom those may influence whom we have influenced. Nothing in nature dies. The tree is cut down and burned. But its elements enter other forms of life and live, making new combinations, which are in turn resolved—thus perpetuating change, but never destroying aught. Thus man, dead, lives in others to whom he has contributed part of himself. Upon this interdependence of one upon another, this intertwining of man with man as twig with twig, is based a most overwhelming argument in favor of personal piety—for by being otherwise, we not only drag ourselves towards perdition, but assist to hurry hundreds,

perhaps thousands of others in their downward course. Thus, man in destroying himself, destroys others—in saving himself saves others. How startling the thought, and yet how true!

To assert that producing causes cease with the immediate effect produced, is to deny all analogy. Let me borrow two illustrations. Suppose two bodies struck together, there is not merely a change of position or motion in one or both. There is not merely a sound produced. Sundry currents are produced. There is a disarrangement of the particles of the bodies in the neighborhood of the point of collision. There is a certain amount of heat evolved. In some cases, a spark results; and sometimes this is associated with chemical combinations. The lighting of a candle produces heat and light, generates an ascending column of gases, and establishes currents—each of which changes is the parent of others. The carbonic acid given off will combine with some base, or yield its carbon to a leaf. The water will modify the condition of the air. The gaseous current, striking a cold body, will be condensed, and will alter the temperature, and perhaps the chemical state, of the surface it covers. The heat melts the tallow and expands the neighboring air. By the falling of the light on various objects, various colors are produced.—These secondary actions also may be traced into ever-multiplying ramifications, until they become too minute to be appreciated. Thus it is throughout the entire world. Nothing exists for itself alone. This is a law which neither the hardness nor the softness of the object, neither its largeness nor its smallness, neither its position nor its qualities, which even human selfishness—the most corroding of all created influences—has never been able to violate or evade. Upon all things it is written, *Thou canst not live for thyself alone*. Man is not above this. Stones and trees, solids and liquids, the organic and the inorganic, as well the surface-found as the deep-buried—all, inanimate though they be, affect others and have taken, are taking, or will take part in the activities of the world of matter. If then it be true that to the material world is vouchsafed the power of mutual and never-end-

ing influence, upon what probable grounds, and with what reasonableness can it be claimed that man's thoughts and words and deeds die with the individual? Man is not below the brute, not lower than the rock, that its speechless voice, once uttered, shall continue to grow in melody—reaching its highest harmony on the Great Day when time shall be no more—while his purest aspirations, his truest words, his noblest deeds sink forgotten and resultless with the occasion which produced them. Every man's experience repudiates the thought. A true word fitly spoken, may convict a heart, which may be the means of arousing numbers; and those, others—the circle ever widening throughout all time. Who cannot recall a critical occasion, when a friend's injunction, long since forgotten but then remembered, when a long buried but revived expression, when a casual remark from a passer-by, when a presumed accidental occurrence, when the veriest trifle, said or done, by those we know not, has determined an event, begun a succession of effects, indefinite in number and comprehensive in extent, and has possibly fixed our own and others' destiny? Who is not, at times, oppressed with the unwelcome memory of foul words once heard, and still polluting whole channels of thought? While memory remains a faithful monitor, the past cannot be a blank; and until memory dies, nothing it has ever seized can be considered dead. As these things are true of individuals, the like may be said of nations. Great, controlling minds do not expire with the bodies in which they acted. The heroes, and warriors, and philosophers of the world, influence daily those who read the records of their achievements; and some, ages ago deceased, are more potential to-day than before their dissolution. Napoleon yet lives in France, and the magic influence of his name made Louis Napoleon President of the Republic. Loyola still lives in the insinuating, tireless, proselyting Order he founded. Voltaire, and Bolingbroke, and Shaftesbury, and Fontenelle yet number their victims by thousands. Wilberforce yet lives in the detestation of the Slave Trade, now almost universal. Calhoun still lives in

the new doctrines he has stamped upon the government. Washington, and Jefferson and Hamilton; and Clay, and Webster and Adams yet live, in the affection and veneration of their countrymen, while around the names of Mary Ware and Susan Allibone, is the ever-fresh aroma of good deeds, springing from benevolent hearts made more lovely by the refining influence of an exalted piety.

But while all this may be admitted, it may still be denied that these influences, and such as these, exert a perceptible effect upon more than individual deeds, or that in the totality of the world's deeds they are appreciable. But who can define the limit within which these influences operate? They act upon men's minds, and through them upon the nation's policy. Can the domain of mind be circumscribed? Neither can the limit of that be circumscribed, by whose influence the mind makes judgment or forms a purpose. A suggestion, casually made, rouses a heroic nature to activity. His deeds mark an age, settle a policy, and found an Empire, with its vast and varied machinery. Did the suggestion which roused the man, end with him? No; it stretched itself forward into the world's history, and carved for itself an eternal home in the great palace of Empire. Let no man, then, declare that men's deeds die with them. They are perpetuated in others—the man of to-day being the embodiment of all the thoughts thought, the feelings felt, the knowledge known by all the generations of men who have gone before. Or, as Pascal has elegantly expressed the thought: “The succession of men, in the course of ages, may be regarded as *one man, who lives always and learns continually.*” The assumption of the mortality of our deeds is repulsive to our feelings, averse from our instincts, shocking to our reason, variant from nature, and reproachful towards God.

It is further alleged, as proof that the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE cannot be highly powerful, that the passions of men have been, and are, the most formidable agency in the world. It is doubtless true that men's passions are active, and that resentment at classes, at interests, at rivals, and at the defend-

ers of obnoxious ideas; that jealousy of neighbors, envy of their prosperity, and hatred of their institutions, are as influential in moving States to legislation, as like passions are in moving men to action; while it is equally true that an honorable ambition, a supreme sense of right, a manly acknowledgment of what is due to others, and an unselfish and unstinting nobleness, are rare among nations and among men. But man is not all evil. Nor are all men alike evil. Some there are, whose elevation of sentiment, high-toned impulses and just ambition, place them before the nations as shining shafts, against which even envy, or jealousy, or malignity, can scarcely blow a breath—bright and beautiful monuments of the excellence of virtue. Such are not without their influence, as well in the far-reaching future as in the eventful present. Were this not so, what would life be worth? In fact, the influence of the good is proportionately greater than their numbers; for mankind have an instinctive reverence for good, and an instinctive shrinking from evil, and are, hence, prepared readily to welcome, encourage and honor the doers of the one, while they merely tolerate or mildly approve the doers of the other.

Passion, allied with power, has been, and is, a potent agent of evil. It has perpetrated, and is perpetrating monstrous enormities. It has confirmed the evil in their purposes, and given them rods wherewith to smite the victims. It has shocked, and is shocking humanity by its outrages, and has covered whole continents with suffering, anguish and despair. Here, as elsewhere, it has connived, and is conniving, at injustice, is immolating the defenceless, and is striking terror to the hearts of thousands. But it is not omnipotent. It has found institutions too strong to be overturned, principles too stable to be moved, feelings too sincere to be conquered, men too bold to be intimidated, and too powerful to be defeated. Its whole marshalled host—the powers of darkness—can never triumph over the powers of light, and it is they who are arrayed in opposition. Thus, while we admit the power of passion over the affairs of mankind, as over the affairs of

individuals, we deny that, as an influence in the world, it wholly displaces the good thoughts, good deeds, high aspirations, and unselfish sufferings of the noble of our race. For evil has not greater vitality than good.

But there is another qualifying thought to suggest. Men's passions are modified by various circumstances—by their training, by the moulding influences around them, by the spirit of their nation's institutions, by their social intercourse and by contact with civilizing and alleviating agencies. The roving Indian, the besotted Hottentot, or the semi-barbarous Chinese, are, in their passions, essentially different from even the uncultivated European or American. The Hindoo mother who willingly offers her babe an offering to her God, has not the same feelings as the civilized mother, whose religion demands no such horrid sacrifice. The murderous Sepoy who takes a fiendish pleasure in killing infants in the presence of their mother, roasting them and compelling her to partake; and who spares neither age, nor condition, nor sex in his unparalleled barbarities, is not to be classed as possessing the same feelings as the enraged American, who oversteps not the boundaries which international justice has affixed to the practices of war. The one has grown up under deeply barbarizing influences—the other under highly civilizing. They are the opposite poles of humanity. The one has had his tastes, instincts and feelings brutalized by the ignorance, superstition and vileness perpetually surrounding him. The other has had opened to his gaze a new and beautiful world, whose perfect loveliness has challenged his worship, has softened his asperities, has taught him new duties, and has cast his mind in a comelier mould. When we add to these influences, that of Christianity itself, we see that men's passions are further modified, even against their will, and without their knowledge, and by what they practically avoid. Thus, if we grant the position that passion is a most powerful influence, we fall back upon the unquestionable truth, that passion itself is not free from the all-pervading, modifying influence of the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE; and that, in computing the effects of

the former, we necessarily include at least a partial recognition of the power of the latter. Thus, wheresoever we turn, we find it impossible to ignore the existence, in men's hearts, and minds, and deeds, of the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE.

I use the words CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE—not the CHRISTIAN CHURCH—for the Church has not always been the perfect representative of the principle. Often its organization has been in the hands of the corrupt, the tyrannical and the base; and its vast machinery, fearful punishments, and its peculiar, almost absolute power, been wielded more for the aggrandizement of Prelates than the good of the people. Its priests have, not rarely, been but little penetrated with the mild and benignant genius of Christianity; and they have frequently been overbearing, arrogant, puffed up with the pride and pomp of power. Civil and Ecclesiastical tyranny early became parts of one system. They had a common basis—the hard hands, willing hearts, toiling bodies of the masses. Each sought to preserve the structure in which it comfortably nestled. Thus, even in English History, the Church was early the handmaid of Monarchy, the steady enemy of Liberty. In times of civil oppression, it taught as fundamental truths, the Divine Right of Kings, and the duty of passive obedience. Doctor Cowell taught that the king was above the law by his absolute power. Others denied that God ever prospered any rebellion against a natural and lawful prince. Sibthorp declared that the king might take the subject's money at his pleasure, and that no one might refuse his demand, on penalty of damnation. Mainwaring believed Parliaments established for the more equal and easy exacting from the people of the demands of the Crown; or, as he expresses it, “for the more equal and easy exacting of that which unto kings doth appertain by natural and original law and justice, as their proper inheritance.” There were noble dissentients from these monstrous doctrines; and one, George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, who refused to license Sibthorp's sermon, was suspended therefor in his office, and banished from London. So generally did such sentiments

prevail among this class, that in the times of James I, a member of Parliament called the clergy "spaniels to the court and wolves to the people." In France, before the Revolution, the Church, long a political body, had become most odious. And justly so; for high authority declares that, notwithstanding the unquestioned excellence of many of the clergy, the Church, as an organization, "shielded vice in high places, while censuring it among the people;" and "threw its sacred mantle over existing institutions" which abounded with abuses, and opposed the writers of the day "when they stood forth on behalf of the general liberties of mankind." Hence it was among the first objects of attack, and fell before the frenzy of a maddened nation. Need I more than refer to Italy, and Spain, and Austria?—those Church-ridden countries, whose life-blood is the bloating beverage of religious hypocrites and civil despots. Surely not to them, or such as they, can the student of history look for the true exemplification of the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE.

But where is to be found the fitting portrayal of this principle? I reply, in the teachings of CHRIST—its author—wherein he blesses the "poor in spirit," and those "that mourn;" the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the forgiving, the long-suffering and those slow to anger. And its best exemplification is to be found in those communities in which the injunction, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and the rule, "Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them," are most fully recognized and most faithfully obeyed. The mere mention of these distinguishing characteristics suggests the thought that the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE is a foe to all injustice, oppression and wrong; and that it demands from government, securities against the commission of either. In this, it makes war upon the prejudices and policy of rulers, for Montesquieu's remark is too true, "that every man who has power, is brought to the abuse of it, and goes on until he finds its limits." The CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE thus, from its very essence, at once became the foe of those who wielded power; and it

early learned how bitter was their hatred. Its early home was among the poor, the suffering, the unofficial: for, we are told, it was the "common people" who heard Christ gladly. It appealed more to the affection of the humble, than to the pride of the powerful; and it found a friend in the one, and a foe in the other. And to-day, Christianity's throne is not in the exalted places of the earth; nor are her greatest triumphs recorded in legislative tome or pretentious parchment. They are rather written on the hearts of her children, and are rarely read by the profane, the scoffing, or the unbelieving. But its demands have not been all unheeded; and in the improved respect for human rights, in the growing equality of privilege, in the increased dispensing of even-handed justice, in the protection of life, liberty and property, in the acknowledgment by legislators of the duties all owe to the cause of morality, and in the general growth of the liberal ideas which mark modern civilization, there is evidence that the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE has been unfolding its beauties, enlarging its circle of influence, and extending its power over the affairs of men—not, indeed, by bolts, and bars, and bayonets, not by violence, disorder and outrage, not by those outward weapons which have been invoked for the defence and propagation of other systems; but by the gentle influence of its precepts, the persuasive voice of enlightened conscience, and the noiseless tread of its all-conquering ideas.

I have alluded to modern civilization, as contrasted with ancient. The distinguishing marks of each have been pointed out by the great publicist, Dr. Lieber, and are worthy of consideration in this connexion. Ancient governments had not, comparatively, prolonged existence, or great recuperative power. But one flourished at a time. They failed to unite the enjoyment of wealth with the enjoyment of liberty—each having grown actually weaker as it grew pecuniarily stronger. They did not attain nationalization of structure. They did not protect individual liberty. They never advanced to the establishment of international codes. Yet all these are *essentials* of good government. For without long life, how can

nations attain their full growth? Without great recuperative power, how can they overcome inevitable reverses? Without the checks arising from rivalry of interests, how can overshadowing despotism be averted? With prosperity, how can they fail to become rich, and if riches destroy them, how can permanency be obtained? Without the local organization necessary to form a NATION, how can government protect the people from abuses, from oppression, from degradation? Without protection to individual liberty, how can individual safety be secured? And without international law, how can national intercourse be regulated, and national difficulties be peacefully settled? From all these running sores, ancient governments suffered. Not so with modern. For they have greater tenacity of life, and greater recuperative power.—Many flourish at the same period. They have assimilated the possession of national and individual wealth with the continued enjoyment of civil liberty; have produced thoroughly-developed, compactly-organized, highly-vitalized NATIONS, with all their extensive appliances; have protected each man as well as whole classes, from the inroads of power; and have established certain great principles for the respect of all, to guide the conduct and regulate the intercourse of each. For such amazing differences, what causes can be sufficient? Will the possession of increased knowledge alone solve the problem? No; for more than knowledge is required, to effect that moderation of human feelings, that temperance in action, that devotion to right, which alone will wholly revolutionize ourselves, others and the world. Will the prevalence and play everywhere of human passions, explain this wondrous growth? No; for this work of construction required rare calmness, utmost patience, unfaltering fidelity, steady courage, high faith—not the excitedness, the restlessness, the impulsiveness, the fitfulness of passion. What, so much as the special, peculiar, all-pervading influence of that religion whose expansive principles are adapted to every phase of society, to every emergency of government, to every relation and duty of mankind, and, when applied, will solve

every difficulty, and extricate from every dilemma?—aided, preserved, and strengthened by a net-work of INSTITUTIONS, strong, compact, and well-knit, capable of resisting the gnawings of jealousy, the restiveness of pride, and the violence of anger.—INSTITUTIONS alike operative upon all, and pervaded by an enlarged and comprehensive humanity.

Passion and violence are the preludes of folly. Who acts wisely, that yields himself to the dictates of burning anger? Who achieves good for himself or others, without the exercise of healthy self-control? Who does not harm his moral nature, by departing from that equability which, in being a conquest of man over himself, is his greatest triumph? Likewise is it with nations. Their hasty, ill-considered, passion-prompted acts, always bear a bountiful crop of evil. And to learn when a nation has done itself, its cause, the great principles of right an inexcusable injury, it is only necessary to inquire when its judgments have been perverted by the heated and hurtful suggestions of passion. Men do not, in general, calmly, determinedly, and from choice, do evil. It is when reason is dethroned and anger enthroned, that words are said, deeds are done, provocations given, which cost long years of repentant sorrow. Thus every fatal error which history points out, every crime which has been expiated by a dissolution, every heaven-defying deed which has cried aloud for vengeance, can be traced to this one grand cause—the disregard of the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE. If, then, this neglect be a fertile source of individual and national suffering—if so much of evil has flowed from it, and is likely to flow from it—it becomes a great question, how is this torrent to be stayed? Not by the agency of the intellectual faculties, for the testimony of the past, and the daily experience of every man, prove that “intellectual education, though it develops and strengthens the faculties of the mind, is yet INCAPABLE of *controlling the passions.*” On the contrary, the intellect often feeds them. Great intellect has been the seat of violent passions, and the greater the intellect, often the more violent the passions. There is but one competent power—

the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE. It is the antipode of passion, and is of superior strength. While the tendency of the one is debasing, the other is refining. The one develops the evil of man's nature, the other draws forth the good. The one drives man downward, the other impels him upward, giving him a new ambition, and opening a new path for his powers. They are natural foes. The field of both being man's moral nature, and the genius of the two being directly antagonistic, one must be extirpated. They cannot divide allegiance over man's heart. Hence, when passion reigned, and when despotism—its child—covered the earth, all was dark, gloomy and repulsive; and, as debauchery, licentiousness, perversion of principle, and every form of wickedness spread, with wonderful rapidity, from the Court to the Church, and from the Church to the people; as the wicked rioted in evil, the weak were trampled on, the innocent were punished with stripes, and the unjust fattened on spoils, the virtuous wept at the accumulating evidences of the reality of the fearful apprehension that earth was, indeed, forsaken of its God. But the fear was groundless. At last error reached its culminating point. The CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE sprang, full-armed, from the heart of Jehovah, commissioned to wage a ceaseless war with man's greatest enemy. It did so; still does so; and will do so, while there is a form of error to be exterminated, an evil sentiment to be uprooted, an evil deed to be prevented, or an evil heart to be changed. The contest will not end until every son of earth, and every human instrumentality, is wrested from a polluting service and is purified; until every living soul is purged with hyssop and made clean, and stands erect, A MAN, all aglow with his perfected powers—redeemed, regenerated and disenthralled, not only in that lower sense of which CURRAN has rapturously spoken, but in that higher and holier sense which a greater than Curran has beautifully and mercifully taught—in whose realization every creature, freed from a more fearful than human oppression—the tyranny of evil—shall be illuminated with the light of the Spirit, and be made a fit residence for the God of all grace.

It is unnecessary, and would be impossible, to trace in detail, the influence of the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE upon every part of man's nature, or upon every institution of his government. This is the work of the historian, not the brief essayist. The briefest mention of the most prominent of its results, is all which falls within our scope. It has driven from existence that hero-worship which led the ancients to deify men, while it keeps fresh, and makes more active, the sentiment of admiration for the truly heroic. It has rescued man from those excessive passions which swallowed up every principle, making of highest merit what we call a crime. It has diverted the sentiment of veneration from mythologic gods, but little better and sometimes much worse than men, and has increased the enthusiasm, energy and power of the feeling, by giving as its object, the author and embodiment of all good, whose holiness, and justice, and goodness, and truth are without limit, or blemish, or defect. It has modified the avarice of men, and proved its indulgence incompatible with prime duties. It has dissipated the dimness and darkness which perplexed, and finally overthrew the ancients—and it bids the modern walk along those deep declivities, over those rocky paths and those treacherous pitfalls—calm, confident and safe. It has taken up Truth where baffled philosophers were forced to abandon its pursuit, has analyzed, described, and displayed its long-sought beauties, and showed its connexion with its author, the great ETERNAL. It is the parent of true charity, which, before, the world knew not—that charity which “suffereth long and is kind,” which “envieth not,” which “vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up,” which “is not easily provoked,” which “thinketh no evil.” It has peopled with exalted creations the moral world, which Paganism left “a wilderness with fiery serpents in it,” and has given its large-heartedness to modern civilization, whose noble benefactions and munificent charities are “the outward and worldly expression of the spiritual truths of Christianity.” It has given art the splendid inspiration, the ravishing tenderness which is its crowning beauty, and which, before, was

seen "as through a glass darkly." It has given triumphs to the pencil of an Angelo, and the chisel of a Crawford. It has added charms to the graceful form of Jutsice. It has enriched Law, by gifts from its vast possessions. It has given Science a grander aim, a surer direction, a holier mission.—It has modified the rigors of war, stimulated the arts of peace, and introduced new and vital elements into society, making their rightfulness the absolute and decisive test of all enactments. It has overturned groveling superstitions, exploded odious distinctions, and inaugurated truer ideas. It is that conservative, yet that destructive spirit which holds fast the good, and pulls down the evil in the world; which is most intolerant of wrong, and most protective of right; which has ever warred against the evil practices of men, and which, while building that splendid and spacious mansion in which all the nations will ultimately live in harmony and peace, is, in our day, most occupied in destroying the ingenious mechanism—those dark passages, those covert retreats, those gloomy dungeons, by which the few have wickedly oppressed the many. Through man—whom bruised and broken, it wrested from the destroyer, and has re-created—whose virtuous impulses it has sustained, whose tastes it has refined, whose conceptions beautified, whose ideal exalted, whose sympathies expanded, whose meekness, patience and courage it has strengthened, and over all whose faculties it has shed its purifying spirit—through this exalted re-creation of its power, the CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE reaches his daily life, his associates, his home, society, and the whole frame-work of government, ennobling all by breathing upon all the balmy sweetness of its nature.

What influence so penetrative? What so pervasive? What so expanded in its reach, so complete in its character, so intense in its action, so marked in its results? Permeating every part of man, and every object within human touch, omitting nothing, baffled by nothing, but bringing all in admirable subjection to itself, it is, as a great balance-wheel, regulating the world; checking its evil tendencies, encouraging

its good, and so moulding all as to give greatest glory to the Divine Author of us all. It is a heaven-sent influence, which no human invention can stay, no obstacles obstruct, and no combination of power crush ; which reaches beyond this earth, and will be co-extensive with eternity. Upon earth, it is the controlling influence. And when the globe has been melted with fervent heat, and the heavens rolled up as a scroll, it will wing its way to the home, whence for man's good it came, and ever growing in power, will through unending ages, rejoicingly intensify the praises which the redeemed will sing to their Great Deliverer.

